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ABSTRACT

Three research projects were conducted over a three year period among secondary school students in the United Kingdom, the United States (Virginia), and West Germany in order to determine students' understanding the 40-year confrontation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. These studies included 1991 students and 136 secondary school staff members and focused on the students' general knowledge levels concerning these organizations' histories and their attitudes toward these alliances. Chapter 1 provides a literature review, and chapter 2 briefly describes the United Kingdom study. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the Virginia and West Germany studies in detail, while chapter 5 suggests some educational implications of and recommendations from the study. Findings indicate that: (1) students' knowledge of modern history is directly related to the extent to which topics are linked to current events and controversies; (2) students at upper secondary school levels can be stimulated to critically study controversial issues; (3) most students, who are taught using a chronological approach, have little knowledge about this topic; and (4) student knowledge levels about this topic might increase if the topic were taught by using a current events and issues approach. Tables are included. (Author/JHP)

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# Secondary Students' Understanding of NATO and the Warsaw Pact: The Educational Implications of Research Conducted in Three NATO Nations*

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Abstract

Secondary Students' Understanding of NATO and the Warsaw Pact: The Educational Implications of Research Conducted in Three NATO Nations

Research was conducted over a three year period among secondary school students in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and West Germany. The purpose of the studies was to determine students' understanding of the 40 year confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

The studies, carried out by using the group interview technique, included 1991 students and 136 staff personnel. Questions asked of the students focused on general knowledge about the history of the pacts and student attitudes concerning the alliances and their future.

The findings produced the following implications for the teaching of modern history: 1) Student knowledge of modern history is directly related to the extent to which topics are linked with current events and controversies; 2) At the upper secondary school level, student attitudes are relatively unaffected by considerations of the controversial aspects of the topics, instead, they are stimulated to think critically about them. The low level of knowledge about the topic studied and the inability to discuss issues among the large proportion of students who are taught using a traditional chronological approach, suggests that secondary school personnel should experiment with teaching modern history through "the window" of current events and issues.

## Chapter 1

## BACKGROUND

The North American and European political leaders who were influential in the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization recognized the importance of sharing their vision with the people of the NATO nations. Brosio's[1] book includes Article III of the Brussels Treaty--a prelude to the North Atlantic Treaty--and Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Both articles pledge that the signatory governments will make every effort to strengthen free institutions by bringing about a better understanding of the principles and basis of their common civilizations and institutions.

Ball[2] presents an extensive discussion of the concern which NATO council members expressed regarding the need to develop the NATO Article 2 functions. Ball notes that the Committee of Three (sometimes called the Three Wise Men) undertook a study of NATO's non-military functions. 'The object was two-fold: first, to give NATO more raison d'être if public opinion should tend to desert a military alliance still regarded by governments as essential to the defense of the member States; and secondly to see whether an answer could be found to the challenge of the new Russian policy of competitive co-existence.' The committee's report presented many specific recommendations to improve the implementation of Article 2. Several of the suggestions single out education, and educators, as important conveyors of why NATO exists.

More recently, Hitchens[3] and Girardet,[4] both writing for the NATO Review, emphasized the importance of the educational factor as a determinant of people's perceptions of defense-détente. The notion is bolstered by the fact that an entire issue of the 1982 Teachers College Record was devoted to

the topic. Articles by Nastase,[5] Abbs,[6] Broughton and Zahaykevich,[7] Boulding,[8] and Totten[9] in that issue of the Record are sometimes scholarly, sometimes impassioned, discussions of the peace movement as a necessary topic for study in the schools of the United States.

That education is an important factor in the shaping of attitudes is obviously a common sense idea, but the part which education plays relative to demographic factors and behavior has also been the subject of much research. Some recent studies, Petty and Cacioppo,[10] Dumas and Lee,[11] Himmelweit,[12] Aizen and Fishblin[13] place varying emphasis on education as a factor in what Himmelweit[14] terms 'the political socialization' of individuals in a given society. Ehman[15] summarizes the findings of research on the subject in the following generalization:

> Compared to other factors such as family and media, school is an important agent in transmitting information to youth. Its importance increases from grade school to high school. The school is less influential in shaping political attitude than shaping knowledge. For low social status groups school is relatively more important [however] in shaping knowledge and attitudes than higher status groups.

Markusen and Harris,[16] on the other hand, use historical data from before and after the Second World War to present support for the theory that education has been a powerful influence in shaping both attitudes and behavior. The researchers' analysis of education in Nazi Germany leads them to conclude that Germany's masters used the schools to prepare all sectors of society for their implementation of the Holocause. They also blame the lack of schooling on the subject of nuclear war in the United States for what they consider the dangerous development and continuation of the arms race since the Second World War.(Although their historical essay is well documented to

demonstrate the power of education in shaping attitudes and behavior, their choice of examples is puzzling since the western democracies seem to face the same dilemma as they did prior to the Second World War: How can the democracies convince a totalitarian bloc to educate its own citizenry about a dangerous course of action which might lead to war?)

A part of the literature review--regarding NATO's founders concern with a need for its peoples to understand the alliance--was the first factor that prompted a research effort conducted from 1985-1987 in three NATO nations. The apparent dispute, however, regarding the role of education in helping young people to understand modern historical events focused the research on how secondary schools in the United Kingdom, the state of Virginia, and West Germany are meeting the need expressed by NATO's "Three Wise Men". Conditions during the three year period--the growing peace movements, the nuclear disarmament initiative, and apparent new Soviet flexibility--provided a unique opportunity to determine how educational establishments in the democracy were reacting to pressures which may challenge the very basis of democratic dialogue.

The results of the three studies are presented on the following pages along with implications the author believes are of import to teacher educators and secondary school social science teachers alike.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE 1985 RESEARCH IN THE UNITED KINGDOM*[17]

The purpose of the study in the United Kingdom was to determine to what degree and in what ways the educational system is conveying knowledge and attempting to shape attitudes regarding the long standing NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation.

Some specific questions addressed in the research were (1) To what extent and how do the official curriculum guides and texts used in the secondary schools--both maintained and independent (public and private in U.S. terms)--refer to and interpret the present mission of NATO and the current debate regarding defence and détente? (2) Do the school systems of the United Kingdom present a common view of defence-détente, or are there regional or other variable differences to be found? (3) How do teachers and administrators in the schools of the United Kingdom view the western and eastern bloc nations' attempts at defence and détente? (4) How do pupils in the secondary schools of the U.K. view the role of the United States and its position in NATO as a factor in the defence-détente equation in the European theatre? (5) Are there political organizations with varying opinions on the subject which have a forum in the secondary schools of the U.K., and if so what are their views and how are they presented to students?

Of utmost importance, however, was the question, What can be learned about ways to enhance secondary student understanding of modern history such as the NATO-Warsaw Pact four decade confrontation?

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* The report of the study was published in the July, 1986 Journal of Educational Administration and History, University of Leeds. The portions included have been reproduced with the consent of the editors.

Chapter 3

## RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN 1986-1987 IN VIRGINIA*[20]

The research described in this article was a follow-up to a pilot study conducted in the United Kingdom in 1985. A major finding of that effort was that students in schools which had introduced 'peace studies' into the curriculum in the early 1980s showed a greater understanding of the history and the issues surrounding the NATO-Warsaw Pact relationship than students in schools which had not adopted such studies. The finding was especially interesting because: (1) the Thatcher government's early reaction in condemning 'peace studies' made the idea a subject of much debate, and (2) by 1985 the 'peace studies' proponents had started to stress other controversial and/or current events topics such as the famine and Africa, the coal strike, and hooliganism at football (soccer) games.

These findings suggested a general hypothesis investigated in the study conducted in the Virginia research: If teachers of modern history extensively relate current and controversial events with the study of history, do students tend to gain a better understanding of what they are supposed to learn? Thus, although the purpose of the research was to determine the extent and in what ways the educational system and other agencies convey knowledge and shape attitudes regarding the issues connected with the long standing NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation, a corollary purpose was to make a test of the general hypothesis.

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*The report of the study is scheduled for publication in the Winter issue of the Virginia Social Science Journal, 1989. Portions have been reproduced with the consent of the editors.

## METHOD

Data for the study were collected by studying documents mentioned in specific questions. There were also on-site structured interviews at selected secondary schools in that portion of the United Kingdom comprised of England, Scotland and Wales. Parts of the structured interviews included items which required a Likert-type response in order to answer question 4 in the purpose of the study. Analysis of the data essentially entailed qualitative-descriptive analysis, but some quantitative analytical methods were also applied. For example, the Likert-type items were used to produce a series of responses employed in a discriminant analyses to determine if the teachers in private schools tend to view the issues differently from those in public schools.

### The Sample

A total of 93 randomly selected secondary schools in the United Kingdom were originally contacted by mail; thirty-five are independent (private schools) and fifty-eight are those operated by the Local Education Authorities (L.E.A. maintained schools). A request for an on-site visit was accompanied by a sample questionnaire regarding the topic of interest. Seventy-two responded, and of these 63 extended an invitation to visit.

The relatively large response, and the fact that a greater proportion of invitations came from independent (private) schools (28), posed something of a dilemma. However, the final selection of 13 L.E.A. schools, 10 independent (private schools) and two 'voluntary' L.E.A. schools was designed to strike a reasonable, if not an absolutely scientific, balance since the schools are well distributed in accord to geographic and demographic factors.

The voluntary secondary schools happened to occur in the sample since they are listed in the handbook of L.E.A. schools. They are, however, somewhat anomalous in that they operate as a cross between independent and ordinary L.E.A. schools. The voluntary schools receive some of their budget from the Local Education Authority and the land for the school building is owned by the L.E.A., but such schools have some autonomy in matters such as the selection of pupils and teachers. (They tend to be Church affiliated.) Table I presents some data concerning the schools which were selected. Since the topic studied is one considered to be very controversial at this time because of demonstrations against the placing of U.S. missiles in the U.K., headmasters were promised absolute confidentially.

Unfortunately the L.E.A. which controls the largest school system, the Inner London Education Authority, refused permission to visit its schools, but an official did extend an invitation to speak with a member of the research staff at the central office. That interview, and research in the curriculum library, proved of some use in providing information concerning the teaching of the topics under study.

Conduct of the Interviews

The 70 interviews with teachers and headmasters were carried out on a one-to-one basis, but those with students were generally conducted with small groups or entire classes. It must be cautioned, however, that the figures in Table I are totals for the given school. The largest group interview was with a class of 26. Most interviews with students occurred with groups of about 5 to 15.

TABLE I: SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE U.K. STUDIED

| School | Approx. Size | Type | Geog. Loc. | Community | No. Staff Interv. | No. Students Interv. | Type Student | Ability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 400 | Indp. (Boarding) | S.E. Eng. | Univ. Town | 3 | 35 | Coed. White | High |
| 2 | 1000 | L.E.A. | S.E. Eng. | Sm. City | 3 | 10 | Coed. Mixed Ethnic | Mixed |
| 3 | 1000 | L.E.A. | Cent. Eng. | Sm. City-Rural | 4 | 30 | Coed. Mixed Ethnic | Mixed |
| 4 | 900 | L.E.A. | Cent. Eng. | Sm. City | 3 | 4 | Boys White | Mixed |
| 5 | 1100 | Vol. L.E.A. | N. Cent. Eng. | Mid. Size City | 3 | 5 | Coed. Mix. Cath. | Mixed |
| 6 | 600 | Indp. (Boarding) | N. Cent. Eng. | Mid. Size City | 3 | 20 | Coed. White | High |
| 7 | 270 | Indp. (Boarding) | N. Cent. Eng. | Large City | 3 | 0 | Coed. White | High |
| 8 | 2000 | L.E.A. | N. Cent. Eng. | Large City | 2 | 22 | Coed. Mixed Ethnic | Mixed |
| 9 | 2000 | L.E.A. | N. Cent. Eng. | Large City | 3 | 16 | Coed. Mixed Ethnic | Mixed |
| 10 | 1000 | Indp. (Day) | Scotland | Mid. Size City | 3 | 0 | Coed. White | High |
| 11 | 2000 | L.E.A. | Scotland | Large City | 3 | 5 | Coed. Mixed Ethnic | Mixed |
| 12 | 550 | Indp. (Day) | Scotland | Large City | 2 | 36 | Boys White | High |
| 13 | 350 | Indp. (Boarding) | Scotland | Mid. Size City | 3 | 8 | Boys White | High |
| 14 | 850 | L.E.A. | Scotland | Rural Co/Sm City | 3 | 5 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| 15 | 1100 | L.E.A. | Scotland | Rural Co/Sm City | 3 | 0 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| 16 | 700 | Indp. (Day) | N.W. Eng. | Mid. Size City | 2 | 9 | Coed. White | High |
| 17 | 1000 | Indp. (Day) | W. Cent. Eng. | Large City | 3 | 20 | Boys White | High |
| 18 | 2000 | L.E.A. | W. Cent. Eng. | Large City | 2 | 0 | Coed. Mixed Ethnic | Mixed |
| 19 | 1000 | L.E.A. | Wales | Sm. City | 3 | 10 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| 20 | 2000 | Indp. (Day) | S.W. Eng. | Mid. Size City | 2 | 8 | Coed. White | High |
| 21 | 1500 | Indp. (Day) | S.W. Eng. | Sm. City | 2 | 5 | Boys White | High |
| 22 | 950 | L.E.A. | S.W. Eng. | Sm. City-Rural | 3 | 46 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| 23 | 2500 | Vol. L.E.A. | S.W. Eng. | Mid. Size City | 3 | 22 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| 24 | 2200 | L.E.A. | S.W. Eng. | Sm. City-Rural | 3 | 0 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| 25 | 630 | L.E.A. | S.E. Eng. | Sm. City | 3 | 47 | Coed. White | Mixed |
| | | | | | 70 | 363 | | |

The major thrust of the interviews with teachers was to determine: (1) What part of the curriculum might include the study of NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the relation between the eastern and western block nations since the Second World War, and (2) the manner in which the material might be taught. Pupils on the other hand were questioned about their knowledge of and attitudes on the subject, and the sources from which they thought they derived their ideas and opinions.

## The Findings

The findings were analyzed in accord with the questions posed in the purpose of the study. Table 2, for example, shows the distribution of courses of study in which topics regarding the cold war, NATO, the Warsaw Pact and east-west relations in general are at least mentioned in the curriculum of the 25 schools studied. It appears that the secondary schools in the U.K. touch upon the subject in a large variety of courses and other school activities. Much more revealing, however, are the qualitative date gathered in interviews with teachers and pupils, and through the inspection of various documents collected during the research.

Very early in the study, for example, headmasters and teachers of history might have indicated in their letters of invitation that the topics play little, or even no part, in the curriculum. Yet during the visits in some schools it was found that there were courses and activities which include a substantial portion of time given to considerations of the topics of interest in the present study. One reason for this, apparently, is that several years ago proponents of nuclear disarmament such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), abetted by the Labour left in Britain, urged the

development of what they termed 'Peace Studies'. Some teachers in various parts of the U.K. introduced these studies into their teaching, and some Local Education Authorities even adopted policies requiring the schools to include peace studies and the curriculum. For example, a document of 1982 produced in Nottinghamshire begins with the following introductory statement:[18]

> The City Council at its meeting on July 14th 1981 passed a resolution which incorporated the following--'in recognition of the initiative taken by UNESCO to promote the growth and development of Peace Education in the schools and colleges in the country'. To that end the Education Committee through its Joint Advisory Committee set up a working party of members and teacher representatives to consider the development of a curriculum of Peace Studies.

Close examination of the document which evolved, discloses some very interesting points that account for the diffusion of topics relating to the issues under study throughout the formal and informal curriculum in many schools. For instance, though it does not prescribe how peace studies should be brought into the curriculum, the Nottinghamshire document discusses various options, including: integration into the existing academic subjects such as geography, history, English literature, science, and religious education; a broadly based programme within the social studies, general education or the humanities; informal teaching within the 'hidden curriculum' through school assemblies, etc.; a tutorial group approach within the 'pastoral care' activities (group guidance authorities); and/or extra-curricular activities such as within appropriate societies and clubs.

The peace studies movement very quickly ran into strong opposition from the Conservative government as well as from various groups which support NATO and the NATO defence strategy. By 1983 the controversy had become intense

TABLE 2: AREA OF THE CURRICULUM IN WHICH THE TOPIC RESEARCHED IS MENTIONED

| School | Type | Modern World History | General Modern Studies | Religious Education | Cadet Training | Civics Social Education, Humanities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | L.E.A. | 1 | | | | |
| 3 | L.E.A. | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 4 | L.E.A. | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 5 | Vol. L.E.A. | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| 6 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 7 | Indp. | 1 | | | | |
| 8 | L.E.A. | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 9 | L.E.A. | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
| 10 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 11 | L.E.A. | | 1 | | | |
| 12 | Indp. | | | | | |
| 13 | Indp. | | 1 | | | |
| 14 | L.E.A. | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 15 | L.E.A. | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 16 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 17 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 18 | L.E.A. | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 19 | L.E.A. | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 20 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 21 | Indp. | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 22 | L.E.A. | | | 1 | | |
| 23 | Vol. L.E.A. | | | 1 | | |
| 24 | L.E.A. | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 25 | L.E.A. | 1 | | | | |

enough to prompt a debate on the subject during a teachers' In-Service Training programme conducted by Trent Polytechnic. Speeches by proponents and opponents, including one made by Sir Keith Joseph, the Thatcher government Minister of Education, were published in a report of the proceedings.[19]

The interviews with teachers and students tended to verify the finding that at least some schools in certain regions of the United Kingdom, carry on a considerable amount of teaching about the issues of defence and detente and that the discussions of those issues lead to a consideration of the role of NATO in the world.

Regional Differences

The nature of the regional differences in teaching about the topics investigated came as somewhat of a surprise. It soon became apparent during the research that the current political climate is to some extent related to the differences found in various parts of the United Kingdom regarding whether the school curriculum should include the study of sensitive issues such as defence and detente. There is no doubt that one key consideration stems from local views concerning teaching about peace and war.

A very slight hint of the regional nature of feelings about the issue was obtained from the result of a discriminant analysis of 15 Likert items on a questionnaire which was forwarded to each school regarding the curriculum. When schools of the industrial English midlands as well as Scotland and Wales were grouped together (Group I), and those of the rural and south-western England were made another group (Group II), teachers in the schools of the two groupings differed in a statistically significant way ($p<.01$) in their

opinions expressed on one of the Likert scaled statements: 'In the secondary school studies of issues related to defence and detente it is (would be) acceptable to use materials made available by organizations which advocate peace through disarmament.' Although both groups agreed with the statement, Group I showed an average value of 3.9 (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 indicating a strong agreement). The Group II average was 3.3.

The regional differences, however, appear to be more complex than what can be surmised from the quantitative analysis of the fifteen items used on the questionnaire. Teachers in the schools of the industrial heartland of England as well as those of Scotland and Wales, in general showed more interest in the teaching of modern history and/or the use of the general curriculum for the study of current events. Teachers in 13 of the 15 schools classified in Group I indicated some curricular activity in areas investigated. The finding was verified through a study of the texts and curriculum guides used. (Both of those schools which showed little activity on the subject are independent (private) and admittedly conservative in their curricular outlook.) On the other hand, only five of the ten schools in the more conservative rural and non-industrial areas include the study of the east-west confrontation in some part of the curriculum.

There are, undoubtedly, some factors involved in these regional differences that could not be explored fully in the study. For example, undertones of the politics of Labour vs. the Conservative government are present in the industrial areas of England. In Scotland and Wales, on the other hand, the issue seems to be further complicated by the separatist movements.

A closer look at attitudes of headmasters and teachers in schools where the curriculum includes a study of the cold war, NATO, defence, détente, etc., indicates that the introduction of 'Peace Studies' in the early 1980s might have helped bring about updating of the curriculum to include more study of modern history. Interviews with teachers and headmasters in such schools showed the issue of peace studies has become a vehicle to stimulate pupil interest in the study of current affairs in general. Curriculum materials obtained from such schools show a liberal use of newspaper articles, BBC documentaries, and television news events. The shift is illustrated by the more current curricular focus on the prolonged coal strike of 1984, the famine in Africa and the phenomenon of hooliganism at soccer games as opposed to the earlier emphasis on the missile crisis and the cold war. Thus, it is possible that local objections to the policies of the current Conservative government, for various political reasons, might be prompting an interest in current events teaching in some areas of the U.K.

The Views of Teachers and Headmasters

Analysis of teacher-headmaster views about east-west relations showed that there are no significant differences concerning attitudes toward NATO between the staffs in schools where the curriculum includes a study of east-west relations and those which do not emphasize the subject area. This is true of schools even where 'Peace Studies' were urged by the Local Education Authorities. Neither of two items of the questionnaire which were designed to seek teacher opinions regarding NATO showed up as significant in the discriminant analysis between Group I and Group II schools. The statistical finding was qualitatively confirmed through the interviews.

It was determined that although professional staffs might include a sprinkling of CND supporters and ultra conservatives, who differ sharply on questions of unilateral disarmament, most secondary educators studies tend to take a slightly favourable stance toward the NATO. More important than this, however, was the finding that no matter the personal feeling about the NATO stance on defence, teachers and headmasters strongly endorsed a balanced approach to instruction about the issues. Even the Nottinghamshire document previously cited states that:[20]

> ...Sensitive political/social/personal issues need to be handled with considerable care and it is absolutely critical that teachers involved present as balanced a view as possible on any particular issue.

The document elaborates on the point in regard to 'Peace Education':

> ...In some ways the term 'Peace Education' may be unfortunate because it conjures up a particular image of neutralist/pacifist movements and may well give rise to misunderstanding by parents..., but schools must give some brief explanation of their documentation on the curriculum so that parents are aware that sensitive issues will be raised.

In the personal interviews teachers were very emphatic about using a balanced approach to teaching about the east-west confrontation. When they were shown two booklets on the topic prepared by the pro NATO British Atlantic Committee, most of them said they would not hesitate to use them, along with materials by the CND, as resource materials. (The BAC booklets, entitled NATO and the Warsaw Pact and Peace and Conflict Studies had been mailed to more than 3,000 secondary schools in England and Wales, but the staffs in only two of the schools visited had seen them.)

Balance in teaching about east-west views is well documented by curriculum guides in those schools that take up the topic. Many teachers in

the schools also provided examples of newspaper articles and editorials which they distribute to pupils as a basis for discussions and term papers. Those materials also range from the views of left to the right in the political spectrum.

The researcher also took the opportunity to view samples of television taped material used in teaching about the topics investigated wherever such material was being used. Again, there is no doubt that the idea of a balanced and objective view is a major consideration in the selection of material among the schools visited. It was found that a frequently used series of such taped material was one on the cold war produced by the BBC in the early 1980s. That series begins with a factual account of the conditions at the end of the Second World War, when the USSR was allied with the Western bloc. It continues with the development of the cold war and the era of détente, and it ends with the still current stalemate in east-west relations. Teachers (and also pupils) in the schools where the series is being used emphasized that the material presents a fair, unbiased account of east-west relations since the Second World War.

In two schools in the English midlands, two in Scotland, and one in Wales, pupils had been shown the film The Day After produced by the American Broadcasting Company and/or Threads by the BBC. Those two films undoubtedly can be considered as presentations of the case for nuclear disarmament. The teachers who used them indicated that discussions following the films showed that they produced a sobering effect rather than altering opinions about whether Britain should disarm unilaterally. Interviews with pupils who had seen the films confirmed this. In fact pupils who viewed The Day After were critical of the 'Hollywood' effects, as they put it.

As the study progressed, it began to appear that teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of material concerning east-west relations might be connected with a teacher's subject emphasis within the social studies and humanities. To test the idea, answers to the fifteen item questionnaire were subjected to a discriminate analysis. When the answers of history teachers as one class were compared to those of other teachers, a significant difference showed up in the form of five variables in the discriminate function. The discriminating variables that formed the function were: two on whether it would be acceptable to use material by pro-NATO and pro-unilateral disarmament groups in teaching, another on whether the curriculum is already too crowded to include much on NATO-Warsaw Pact, and two on perceived sources from which pupils gain knowledge and formulate opinions about world affairs. History teachers tended to find the use of materials prepared by outside groups somewhat less acceptable than did teachers with backgrounds in political science, humanities, etc. History teachers tended to see the curriculum as too crowded to include much about current events. They also were more likely to indicate that pupils obtain information and form opinions from what they learn from sources such as the home or the media. A 'blind' application of the discriminant function was made on the two groups: history teachers vs. others. Seventy-three per cent of the history teachers and 77 per cent of the other social studies teachers were correctly identified by their answers to the five variables in the function. A random guess would have produced only a 50 per cent chance of being correct.

Pupils' Views

The fourth question of the study was aimed at a determination of secondary school pupils' views of the United States as a leader of the free world. In particular, pupil opinions of the role of the United States in NATO were sought. Ideas voiced by the pupils interviewed ranged from outright hostility toward the U.S., and President Reagan in particular, to acceptance that the United States is, of necessity, the leader of the western bloc. By far, the most prevalent view seemed to be that the United States, by virtue of its power and influence, must serve as the protector of its much weaker allies. Some pupils, in two different schools, went so far as to draw an analogy that the U.S. is to NATO as the USSR is to the Warsaw Pact.

The analogy obviously misses the point of the important differences between the two pacts in terms of the relationships of each major power to its partners. The interesting thing, however, is that both schools where pupils made the erroneous comparison were in relatively conservative areas (Group II) and the teaching of 'modern' history in the two schools ends with the year 1945. Further probing with questions about the recent placement of missiles in the United Kingdom showed that pupils in one of the schools did not even know that such an event had taken place. This was in sharp contrast with some very sophisticated discussions and debate about east-west relations which the researcher was able to elicit among pupils where there has been an emphasis on 'peace studies'. In those discussions, pupils who did take sides on questions such as unilateral disarmament, as well as those who were ambivalent about the issues, showed an astonishing knowledge of the arguments that are presented by the proponents and opponents. These discussions were earnest, at times even heated--but seemingly without rancour.

Equally important, however, was the finding that pupils in the schools where 'peace studies' have been introduced did not display signs of the indoctrination feared by the Conservative government. There is no doubt that in those schools the pupils who either belong to the CND, or who attended peace rallies, were more willing to voice their opinions and engage in debate with their fellow students. But the relatively small proportion of pupils who support the CND position appears to be the same in all regions of the U.K. (from 5 to 10 per cent).

One reason for the small number of CND supporters among secondary school pupils was probed as a corollary question. It was found that whatever the merits of the CND arguments, most secondary students in all the schools visited feel that the more radical people in the movement do damage to its ideals through their actions. Again and again pupils made derogatory remarks about the people who have tried to stop the deployment of U.S. missiles by disruptive tactics. Pupils said they believed that such tactics backfire. This attitude was even found to be true among pupils who said they supported CND ideals.

Follow-up questions in which pupils were asked their sources of opinions (parents, media, school) showed that most pupils believed that their opinions about controversial topics such as those discussed are derived from the media and especially from television. Practically none of the pupils indicated that teachers or the school activities helped shape their opinions about controversial topics. A puzzling aspect of the finding is that pupils in schools where modern studies are emphasized alluded to newspaper articles they had read and/or the television tapes about recent history and current

events in discussing questions about NATO, the Warsaw Pact, detente and the nuclear confrontation. The fact that the reading of the articles and tape viewing may have taken place as a result of school sponsored activities apparently did not register with the pupils.

Another interesting aspect of the study developed when those pupils who voiced strong opinions, either positive or negative, about the CND were asked why they thought they had such feelings. Paradoxically, some of the strongest CND supporters were found to be pupils in several of the independent (private) schools who readily admitted they had studied CND arguments in order to counter the conservative ideas of their parents and teachers. On the other hand, the most vocal anti-CND sentiment came from maintained school pupils in Welsh, Scottish, and the English schools where some staff members belonged to CND. These pupils also admitted that they had developed anti-CND rationale to counter the ideas they thought their teachers might hold. Evidently teacher baiting might be a world-wide sport in democracies.

Influences of Outside Organizations

The question of the extent to which organizations with varying views about east-west relations from outside the school have a forum in the schools was also a consideration in the study. Headmasters and teachers insisted that if the views of any such organization were admitted into the studies, it would occur only as an exercise in critical thinking during which all sides of a controversial topic would be considered. No evidence was found that the principle was being violated. Two influential organizations with opposing views about the stance which should be taken by Britain in the east-west

confrontation--the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the British Atlantic Committee--have had limited success in placing their material in the schools.

There seem to be several reasons for the finding. Among some teachers and headmasters, for example, the CND is viewed as a front for the far out left wing and such teachers expressed a reluctance to use CND material in their instruction. The BAC is not well known among teachers and headmasters, and few of them were acquainted with the material published by that organization.

The major reason for not using materials from such organizations, however, seems to be that many schools simply do not include in-depth study of modern history, or even if they do, teachers stick to the limited information found in texts about the period 1945 to the present. It is primarily in some of the schools of Group I areas where there has been a movement to include the controversial topic 'peace studies', that teachers have made an effort to go beyond the textbook. In questioning those teachers, it was apparent that a 'balanced approach' to the controversial topic requires the use of outside sources. Textbooks tend to be severely limited as a source for such topics; they are quickly outdated and only touch upon each of many issues.

The only outside organizations which have a direct role in the curriculum of most independent (private) schools, and a handful of maintained schools, are the Armed Forces through cadet programmes. (The programmes resemble the Junior ROTC found in some American Schools.) Wherever cadet groups were found during the study, pupils in them were questioned about the nature of their activities. Pupils were asked about the extend to which they

might be instructed about international relations, issues of war and peace, etc. None of the pupils interviewed indicated that any of the instruction focused on such issues. It was very apparent that the Armed Forces deliberately avoid bringing up topics which might be considered controversial. Instead, emphasis is on the adventure and technical knowledge which pupils can obtain through being in the organizations. The only hint that pupils might receive instruction in the area investigated came from some sixth formers (17-19 year olds) from one independent school who had spent time in a summer encampment with the British Army in Germany. Members of that group indicated that they had learned about the theory behind the doctrine of limited battlefield use of nuclear weapons. Another cadet group in a Local Education Authority school reported that their sponsoring force, the Navy, had supplied a film which was shown at a school assembly on the role of the Royal Navy in NATO.

## Discussion and Conclusions

There was an early recognition by NATO council members of the need for the peoples of the western democracies to understand the reasons for the existence of NATO. The literature indicates that formal education within democracies has importance not only in providing knowledge, but also in shaping political attitudes toward institutions such as NATO. The major questions for the pilot research which was conducted were formulated to obtain some notion as to the kind of views which pupils in secondary schools in Britain might be forming: notions about issues such as defence, détente, the cold war NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation, nuclear disarmament, peace and war.

The study in the United Kingdom was particularly timely since some schools there had introduced 'peace studies' in the early 1980s and the movement has more recently spread to the United States. One reason for conservative alarm was summed up very well by a teacher from a school in the English Midlands, who wrote to the researcher as follows:

> The fact that Peace Studies are the product of Labour controlled education authorities, rather than Conservative ones, has introduced a political element which has blighted rational discussion. The fear of political indoctrination by suspect left-wing teachers using appeal to the emotions to put over beliefs in a one sided disarmament, although understandable, has led to misunderstanding and presumption from the opponents of Peace Studies, who seem to be saying that the fear of political bias is too great for the innovation to be allowed to take place. Yet there are in reality large areas of agreement between the two sides.

The alarm of the Thatcher government concerning the teaching of the politically sensitive issue is now being echoed in the United States. For example, an Associated Press report on the current American debate about peace studies, dated 27 June 1985, was published in newspapers throughout the U.S. Although the arguments about such studies began much earlier in the United Kingdom, they continue today. A general purpose of the study was to learn something from the results of the British experience in teaching about the east-west relationships in a time when the proper approach to the relationships has become a subject of controversy.

The findings of the research indicate that instruction concerning the issues surrounding the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation is not to be found consistently in the secondary schools of the United Kingdom. This is true of both state-supported and independent schools. To some small extent, those

schools where teachers choose to prepare pupils in modern history may include a bit of factual instruction about the cold war and the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but even 'modern' history may end at 1945.

In a few areas of Britain, such as the industrial English midlands, Scotland and Wales, where the 'peace studies' were introduced in the early 1980s, the issues concerning the east-west differences about disarmament have permeated the curriculum: sometimes in the courses of modern history; sometimes in 'general' studies, religion, social studies, political science, humanities or even in the 'hidden' curriculum. The more conservative approach to the teaching of modern history by history teachers might have something to do with the fact that current events were often found in places in curriculum other than modern history. Whatever the reason, however, it seems that controversy, and a willingness of laymen and educators to tackle such topics, have produced curricular changes which lead to some in-depth consideration of the NATO-Warsaw Pact relationship.

There is a possibility that the original introduction of peace studies tended to have the political overtones of Labour left versus Conservative right, and/or the separatist movements of the Scots and the Welsh. The evolution of the studies in Britain does not appear, however, to have brought about the type of indoctrination feared by the conservative right. The reasons for this are that: (1) professional educators in the secondary schools of the U.K. do not hold the same views about all the complex issues involved--these people probably display a spectrum of views as diverse as that of the population in general; (2) whether teachers in schools where peace studies have been introduced support the CND or are more in favor of

the NATO positions, they tend to find the notion of teaching in a one-sided fashion repugnant; (3) as the recent placement of U.S. missiles has faded from the news, 'peace studies' have evolved into general studies of the sources of conflict in the modern world (Even more recently, attention has turned toward the ecological problems posed by nuclear power and the famine in Africa.); and (4), given the opportunity, teenage pupils in the schools of a democracy seem to exert their independence of thought, bridling at the very thought that their teachers might try to brainwash them.

Another important finding was that pupils in the schools where teachers, for various reasons, avoid instruction concerning the issues studied not only lacked knowledge about NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but were unbelievably ignorant of the current controversy about the U.S. placement of nuclear missiles in Britain. When questioned about the newspapers they might read, such pupils mentioned only the sensational tabloids, and their television viewing did not tend to include the news programmes.

In view of the findings in other schools where current events have become part of the curriculum--sometimes as a result of the introduction of peace studies--it would appear that it is a mistake for the schools to avoid the study of current events just because the events might be politically sensitive. If the schools of a democracy do not prepare young people to think critically about controversial issues, who will? It should be very alarming to both conservatives and liberals of a democracy to have pupils completing secondary education with little recognition of what is going on around them. The founders of NATO realized the dangers inherent in having peoples of democracies who are not prepared to make intelligent choices based upon a careful consideration of all options.

Other specific questions addressed in the research that helped in testing the hypothesis through a descriptive research were: (1) To what extent and how do the official curriculum guides and tests used in the public secondary schools of Virginia refer to and interpret the mission of NATO? (2) Do the school systems of Virginia present a common view of the defense-détente debate or are there regional differences to be found? (3) How do students view the role of the U.S. in NATO and the USSR in the Warsaw Pact? (4) How much do pupils understand about the history of the confrontation and the current debate concerning, SALT, the ABM agreement, 'star wars', and the possible disarmament agreement? (5) What are the major sources of information and attitudes regarding the topic and issues? (6) How do students of the Commonwealth compare to students of the United Kingdom in the understanding and attitudes concerning the issues studied?

## Method

Data for the study were collected by studying various documents such as curriculum guides and texts. Most of the data, however, came from on-site structured interviews with teachers and students. Analysis of the data essentially entailed qualitative-descriptive analysis, but some quantitative analytic methods were also used. For example, during class interviews with students, a record was kept of the number of students who indicated that they knew the answers to informational questions about the topic. The average number of pupils who indicated their knowledge were converted to a rough percentage of each class. This served as an index of group knowledge and was used, through analyses of variance, to determine such questions as the possible relationship of teaching methods and materials used to the level of

class knowledge.

The Sample

A total of 30 secondary schools were selected through a stratified random sampling method and contacted for possible includion in the study conducted during the 1986-87 school year. The sampling process was designed to include schools in the various geographic parts of the state. Stratification was used, however, to allow for more schools from the more densely populated areas of the eastern part of the state. Table 3 shows the 17 schools which accepted the invitation to take part in the study. It also shows some of the demographic variables associated with the final sample.

(Insert Table 3 Here)

The 38 interviews with teachers were carried out on a one-to-one basis, but those with students were conducted with entire classes. The choice of classes to be interviewed was made by the staff of each school.

The major thrust of the interviews with teachers was to determine: (1) what part of the curriculum might include the study of NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and relations between the eastern and western block nations since the Second World War, and (2) the manner in which the material might be taught. Pupils on the other hand were questioned about their knowledge of and attitudes on the subject, and the sources from which they thought they derived their ideas and opinions.

## The Findings

The findings were analyzed in accord with the questions posed in the purpose of the study. The first question concerned the books and curriculum guides used for social studies classes in the secondary schools of Virginia.

TABLE 3: VIRGINIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDIED

| School | Approx. Size | Geog. Loc. | Community | No. Staff Interv. | Type Class Interv. | No. Student Inter. | Type Student Body | Class Ability Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 300 | East Cent. | Sm. Town | 2 | | | 15%B 85%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov 12 | 17 | | Mixed |
| | | | | | (2)Gov 12 | 19 | | High |
| | | | | | (3)W.Hist. 11 | 9 | | High |
| 2 | 1500 | North East | Rural | 4 | | | 12%B 88%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov 12 | 30 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Am.Hist. 11 | 21 | | High |
| | | | | | (3)W.Hist. 10 | 35 | | High |
| | | | | | (4)Gov 12 | 24 | | Avg. |
| 3 | 750 | Cent. | Rural | 3 | | | 30%B 70%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov 12 | 18 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (2)Hist. 11 | 18 | | High |
| | | | | | (3)W.Geo. 10 | 25 | | High |
| | | | | | (4)Civics 10 | 22 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (5)Am.Hist. 11 | 20 | | Avg. |
| 4 | 1500 | North East | Sub | 3 | | | 10%B 90%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Current 12 Ev. | 11 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (2)Am.Hist. 11 | 25 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (3)Am.Hist. 11 | 20 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (4)Gov. 12 | 21 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (5)Am.Hist. 11 | 27 | | High |
| 5 | 2000 | Tidewater East | City | 3 | | | 37%B 63%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov 12 | 20 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (2)Current 11-12 Events | 23 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (3)Gov 12 | 26 | | Mixed |
| | | | | | (4)Gov 12 | 25 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (5)Am.Hist. 11 | 22 | | Avg. |
| 6 | 1400 | Tidewater | City-Sub. | 2 | | | 15%B 85%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov 12 | 20 | | Mixed |
| 7Jr.HS | 1500 | Tidewater | City-Sub. | 2 | | | 20%B 80%W | |
| | | | | | (1)W.Hist. 10 | 34 | | Mixed |
| 8 | 514 | West | Rural | 2 | | | 5%B 95%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Am.Hist. 11 | 12 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Gov. 12 | 18 | | Avg. |

TABLE 3: VIRGINIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDIED

| School | Approx. Size | Geog. Loc. | Community | No. Staff Interv. | Type Class Interv. | No. Student Inter. | Type Student Body | Class Ability Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1200 | West | City | 1 | | | 5%B 95%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov. 12 | 17 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Goe. 10 | 28 | | Avg. |
| 10 | 1100 | Tidewater | City | 1 | | | 30%B 70%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Int.Rel.11&12 | 16 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Am.Hist. 11 | 25 | | High |
| | | | | | (3)Gov. 12 | 30 | | Avg. |
| 11 | 1600 | Tidewater | City | 2 | | | 46%B 54%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov. 12 | 17 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Int.Rel. 12 | 15 | | High |
| | | | | | (3)Gov. 12 | 28 | | Avg. |
| 12 | 650 | East Cent. | Rural-Sub. | 2 | | | 35%B 65%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov. 12 | 15 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (2)Am.Hist. 11 | 18 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (3)Am.Hist. 11 | 24 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (4)N. ROTC | 10 | | Low |
| 13 | 1800 | East Cent. | Sub.-Rural | 2 | | | 35%B 65%W | |
| | | | | | (1)W.Affairs 10,11,12 | 23 | | Mixed |
| | | | | | (2)AmHist/Engl1 | 35 | | High |
| 14 | 875 | Tidewater | City | 2 | | | 50%B 50%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov. 12 | 28 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (2)Gov. 12 | 29 | | Avg. |
| | | | | | (3)Gov. 12 | 16 | | Avg. |
| 15 | 1800 | East Cent. | Sub. | 2 | | | 10%B 90%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov. 12 | 23 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Gov. 12 | 14 | | High |
| | | | | | (3)Gov. 12 | 17 | | High |
| 16 | 1000 | East Cent. | City | 2 | | | 85%B 15%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Am.Stud. 12 | 15 | | High |
| | | | | | (2)Gov. 12 | 22 | | Avg. |
| 17 | 1100 | East. Cent. | Rural | 3 | | | 55%B 45%W | |
| | | | | | (1)Gov. 12 | 20 | | Mixed |
| | | | | | (2)Gov. 12 | 19 | | Mixed |
| | | | | | (3)Am.Hist. 11 | 26 | | Mixed |
| **TOTALS** | | | | **38** | | **1092** | | |

Of 26 different social studies texts found in the schools visited, coverage concerning NATO varied from none to a few paragraphs. (A single text used in one school with advanced placement students had extensive discussions of the topic. The book, American Foreign Policy Since World World II by J. Spanier is published by Holt, Reinhart and Winston). Information about the Warsaw Pact was found to be even more meager in the texts other than the Spanier volume. It is obvious, therefore, that if teachers rely solely on the information in texts, students will have received such minimal instruction about the issues that it may be an exercise in futility. This particular finding is important in the light of some of the other data collected through interviews with teachers and students.

The curriculum guides reviewed were generally not very informative regarding the extent to which the topic is part of the curriculum in the schools visited. The usual practice seems to be that topics to be included provide teachers with an outline of the material to be covered in the various courses. In two schools the guides also included the approximate time to be spent on the various topics. Again, as with the texts, the history of the confrontation between the two military alliances receives minimal attention - usually in the 12th grade government course.

One notable exception was a school which includes a Navy Junior ROTC program. During the program, students are exposed to units on the nuclear age and the cold war. The impact of the instruction was noticeable in other classes. Students who were members of the corps showed up as quite knowledgeable about details concerning NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Their fellow students, on the other hand, evidently had not yet covered the material.

The researchers tried to follow the lead by checking students in other school systems that include armed forces Junior ROTC, but it was found that other such programs, as in the U.K., placed no emphasis on the global aspects of defense policies. Rather, the other programs stress the "bread and butter" aspects of military training and discipline and have no impact on the wider school curriculum.

Since regional differences were found in the U.K., and since some parts of Virginia include large military populations, the possible differences among the schools in various parts of the Commonwealth was studied. The question was approached both quantitative and qualitatively. Quantitatively, an analysis of variance was applied to the class knowledge index (average percent of each class indicating knowledge of informational questions). The nominal variable used was the geographic regions of the state established for the sampling: East Central, North East, Central, Tidewater, and West. The analysis showed no significant differences.

The qualitative analysis involved a coding of answers to those questions which required students to discuss issues such as 'star wars' defense and the current NATO and Warsaw Pact stance on the disarmaments proposals. Class discussions of the issues were rated from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The class total on four such questions provided a score for an analysis of variance. Again, no significant difference was found.

The findings regarding question 3 (Virginia students views of NATO), question 4 (extent of their understanding of the issues), and question 6 (how Virginia students compare to their British counterparts), presented some interesting similarities and differences between the schools studied in the two

countries. The students in Virginia schools showed as much variability in pupil knowledge as did the British students - from almost no knowledge at all to a great amount of information. In some cases up to 85% of a class would indicate that they knew the answers to such questions as "Can you name some member nations in NATO and the Warsaw Pact." U.K. students with higher ability levels, and with higher informational scores, tended to outdo comparable Virginia students in the quality and sophistication of their answers. The reasons for this are confounded, however by several factors.

First, some of the British students who presented the most sophisticated discussions were in the upper levels of their secondary schools. This would be roughly equivalent to that of our junior colleges. Second, a large portion of advanced level U.K. students were attending private schools. These were included in the U.K. sample, since many of their secondary school age pupils attend such schools. The British private schools tend to feature smaller classes than the Virginia public institutions visited.

A major difference between the British students and those interviewed in Virginia, however, was that none of the Virginians questioned whether President Reagan and his administration are capable of leading NATO and the free world. Even among British students in the most conservative sections of the U.K. and the most conservative schools, unsolicited questions were asked and comments made, about the American President's leadership ability. Frequent questions and comments in the U.K. began: "How can an actor...?", and "Reagan is a puppet of...". Virginia students, even those critical of the Strategic Defense Initiative, or other administration proposals, never brought up the question of the President's ability as a leader. This, in

spite of the fact that the "Iran-Contra Affair" broke during the study.

Answers to question 5 (main sources of information and attitudes) was analyzed by considering the numbers of students in each class visited who attributed their informational knowledge and attitudes about the topic to parents, media, school or other sources. Similar questions were asked of the teachers regarding their students.

By far, the Virginia students, like their British counterparts, tended to attribute their knowledge to media, about 52%, versus 21% saying parents, 19% school and 9% other sources such as the church. The school was given even less credit as a shaper of opinion. The figures were 69% media, 20% parents, 8% school and 2% other.

Virginia teachers, on the other hand, like British teachers, tend to believe that student attitudes about a topic such as the one studied are a product of the home, while information is about equally derived from the school and the media. Unlike Virginia teachers, however, the researchers found the teachers in a few regions of Britain were making very extensive use of very excellent television material on the history of the cold war. Needless to say, students in those classes were very well informed about the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation. Some Virginia teachers, on the other hand, are making good use of current newspapers and magazines.

Another major difference between the Virginia and the British schools was very evident in the utter lack of 'peace studies' in any of the Commonwealth school visited. Although the Virginia teachers, like British educators said that they would not hesitate to tackle controversial subjects in their courses, none of the schools visited have introduced the topic.

Peace studies were originally pressed for in the U.K. by the labor left and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Now even the NATO supporting, right leaning, British Atlantic Committee has developed its own version of peace studies for the schools. This is not to say, however, that other controversial subjects have not entered the curriculum in Virginia. Sex education was cited by a few teachers as an example.

Unlike some British teachers, those in Virginia all give the appearance of being completely apolitical. While some teachers in the U.K. said they belonged to the campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and/or supported the Labor Party endorsement of unilateral nuclear disarmament, none of the teachers in Virginia said they were involved with causes of the political left or the right. Thus, unlike some secondary students in the U.K. who took delight in countering the radical views of such teachers, secondary students in Virginia probably do not find such targets. The closest a few Virginia teachers came to this was in the use of materials obtained from the U.N. and the USSR diplomatic mission in Washington, as basis of debate. A few teachers had used people from the NATO command based in Norfolk to make presentations to classes or during assemblies. Also teachers in five of the schools provide opportunities for students to take part in model U.N. programs. In such cases, the findings seemed to correlate with higher levels pupil of understanding of the topic under investigation.

The most important aspect of the study centered on the question of whether a modern history teaching approach which begins with current, and in particular controversial, events as a way of understanding recent history enhances learning. A direct way to look at the relationship was to analyze

both the information index and the quality "scores" in terms of the approach used. Here again using the 52 classes as the units of measure, the information scores (index) as the criterion and the major teaching approach - conventional versus a current events emphasis - as the independent variable, an analysis of variance was performed. The result of an F value of 20.88 with 51 df, which shows a random probability of less than .000. The R square indicated that teacher approach accounted for about 30% of the criterion variance. The grand mean of the information index was 28% with the conventionally taught classes average deviating by 11 points below and the non-conventional groups 12 points above the grand mean.

The analysis was repeated using ability level of each class as a control variable. Now the F for teaching approach reduced to 13.03, but the significance remained at the .000 level. When the average index scores for the two levels of approach were adjusted for ability level, however, they were shown to deviate -5 and +6 from the grand mean rather than -11 and +12.

Further, since the total R square in the second analysis indicated that both ability level and approach together accounted for 46% of the criterion variance, it must be accepted that some of the variance of the two approaches can be attributed to the fact that higher level classes were found more often to be taught by the unconventional approach than the average classes. This finding complicates the interpretation since the descriptive research design makes it difficult to assign cause.

The analysis of variance of the quality of information "score" was conducted in the same manner. The grand mean for all classes was 8.6 points out of a total possible 20 points with the average of the conventionally

taught classes deviating -1.33 points and the current event groups +1.88. The F value for the analysis at 22.7 with 5ldf again was highly significant with less than .000 random probability.

Re-analysis control for ability levels of the classes reduced the deviation to -.96 and +1.35 respectively, but the F of 10.5 again showed a highly significant relationship of method of teaching to the quality of answers given to discussion questions about the continuing confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Quantitative analysis of the date, however, does not bring out the fact that even informational questions were often answered incorrectly by students who thought they knew the answers to given questions. For instance, when asked if they could name at least one NATO and one Warsaw Pact nation, some students might say Switzerland and China. Worse yet were answers in which Warsaw Pact nations were identified as belonging to NATO and vice versa. (The research often found himself providing small lessons in geography as well as political science).

Conclusions

The findings of the study might be interpreted to mean that the Virginia secondary students, especially those of higher ability, held their own in comparison to the British students. This is correct in that some students in the British schools did more poorly. There were even Virginia students who outperformed the best of those interviewed in the U.K. on the general information questions. As with the study in Britain, however, close examination of the results shows that there is not much to be encouraged about. Too many of the Virginia students, showed both a low level of

information and quality of understanding of the complex issues concerning the NATO-Warsaw Pack four decade long confrontation. For example, the information index average of all classes of 28% indicates that typically only about 300, of the close to 1100 students in the sample, tended to even hazard guesses to even simple questions such as, "What do the initials NATO stand for?," or "Can you name one country that belongs to NATO?" Even higher ability classes only averaged about 39% on informational questions.

Results on the quality of answers to questions regarding understanding issues such as the nature of American leadership of NATO versus that of the Soviet Union with the Warsaw Pact are equally discouraging. For example, very few students had even heard of Hungarian attempt to leave the Warsaw Pact; this even through the 30th Anniversary of the event was featured in newspapers and television in October of 1986, and most of the school visits were made after that time.

Further, although discussion questions such as "Do you favor Star Wars?", evoked single yes or no response from a fairly large proportion of students in classes, the follow-up of "Why do you favor/do you not favor the idea"," tended to produce very few reasoned responses.

The quality average of 8.6 on a scale of 5 to 20 reflects the general low level of responses to such questions. Even the average of about 2 points higher for high ability groups indicates that few students were following the current debates regarding the Iceland summit and the proposed arms limitation treaty, let alone the historical events which have led to the debates.

Discussion

The most encouraging aspect of the study for the researchers was that in

spite of the general low level of knowledge and conceptual understanding found, their were individual and groups of students in some schools that showed an astonishing level of understanding of the topic. Thus, in a "good news, bad news" mode one might say that the good news is that there are shining examples of well taught classes and informed students to be found in Virginia. The bad news, however, is that since democracies are highly reliant on a broad well informed electorate, a few shining examples are not enough.

The results of the study should be equally disturbing from the point of view of both NATO supporters and non-supporters. The political leaders of North American and Europe who were influential in the development of the North Atlantic treaty organization recognized the need for the signatory governments to strengthen free institutions though the education of the citizenry.

But those in the democracies who do not support NATO's current stance can take little comfort. The lessons of history also show that an uneducated electorate can become so apathetic that old ideas can continue long after they outlive their usefulness. Fresh approaches can only arise from vigorous, reasoned, debate. In democracies, education is the necessary catalyst for such debate.

The study demonstrated not only a need to improve teaching of the specific topic investigated in the secondary schools of Virginia, but also a high probability of a need to improve the teaching of modern history and political science in general. Possible ways to do this were suggested through the research in Virginia as well as the study in the U.K. The

apparent confirmation that there is a relationship between an approach that starts with the issues of the day shows promise, but the idea requires testing through experimental design research. The present study does not explain why the high ability groups appeared to have a disproportionate number of teachers using the non-conventional approach. Is it because superior teachers are being assigned to such groups or because teachers of the higher ability groups find that the method simply works better with those students? There was also apparent corroboration of the notion that exposing students to the controversies surrounding the NATO-Warsaw Pact current stances can stimulate students to learn more about the history of the confrontation. There is obviously a pressing need to explore these and other questions about how to improve the teaching of an area that is vital to democracies.

# Chapter 4

## THE 1987 STUDY AMONG WEST GERMAN GYMNASIA STUDENTS

In the fall of 1987, the study of secondary students understanding of the NATO-Warsaw Pact four decade confrontation was continued in the Federal Republic of West Germany (der Bundesrepublik Deutschland). Although the major purposes of the research were the same as those of the studies in the United Kingdom and the state of Virginia, there were some differences resulting from a deviation in the method of data collection that was necessary. (The variation is explained under the method section.)

Answers to the following questions were sought during the study in West Germany: (1) To what extent and at what level of Gymnasia study is the history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact addressed? (2) Are there regional and/or school to school differences in the approach to the topic as in the U.K. and Virginia? (3) If there are regional differences in the topical approach, are they associated with the political alignment of the West German Länder (state) government which run the schools? (4) How do the secondary students view the U.S. role in NATO? (5) what effect, if any, have the peace movements had on student attitudes? and (6) What are the factors that may influence student understandings and attitudes concerning the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation?

### Method

Data for the study were collected by studying textbooks and curriculum guides used in the schools included in the sample. There were also on-site structured interviews with English speaking administrators, teachers and students at the secondary schools selected. Interviews with education

officials of some of the various Lander (states) which are under the control of the major political parties in West Germany were also conducted to determine their position on what should be taught about east-west relations.

The sample consisted of 17 secondary (gymnasium level) schools selected by a stratified sampling method from a list supplied by the education ministers from eight of the eleven Lander of West Germany. Five of the eight states where the schools are located are controlled by the conservative Christian Democrats and three controlled by the Social Democrats. Two of the schools visited ostensibly were to be at "Model U.N. Schools." At an international conference, attended by the researcher in Berlin in 1985, several speakers referred to "Model U.N. Schools". Further inquiry produced an impression that the curriculum in the schools emphasize global issues rather than a nationalistic approach to social studies and history. They were reported to have been designated as Model U.N. Schools by the United Nations.

The students interviewed were almost all at the grade 13 level in the 17 gymnasia selected. (In a few schools, some 12th graders were interviewed). Thus, the students, who had begun their study of English at the fifth grade were all quite proficient in the language. Also, to ensure that there would be no problem, most interviews were conducted in advanced English classes in the presence of teachers who could help both the students and the researcher if the ideas and/or questions needed translation. (Sometimes, if students needed to say something in German, they were urged to do so by the researcher, and, if necessary, the teacher would translate the thought). The suggestion to conduct the interviews in English classes came from a West German in exchange student in a Virginia school during the previous research. It proved to be an excellent suggestion.

The stratification of the sample was primarily made in terms of urban-suburban and rural school systems. It was also considered important to include a balance of classes in areas controlled by the three dominant political parties: the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU); Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU); and the liberal Social Democratic Party (SDP). Table 4 illustrates some of the demographic variables of the gymnasia classes included in the study.

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The data were primarily analyzed qualitatively because much of the material collected consisted of student and teacher reflections on the issues and curricular materials used in the schools. There was an attempt, however, to use statistical methods to determine if there might be significant differences in student knowledge concerning the topic studies between classes located in conservative led Länder and those governed by the liberals. There were three reasons for that analysis. First, gymnasia in some Social Democrat areas have undergone curricular changes since the 1960s to make them less specialized and more comprehensive in their offerings. Second, the two parties have, in the past, differed in their policies toward the eastern bloc of nations. Finally, the research in Britain showed sharp differences in student attitudes and knowledge of issues between those areas of Britain under Labor Party control and those led by the Conservative Party. The data were also analyzed quantitatively in terms of several other variables such as urban-suburban class setting versus rural location.

TABLE 4 - WEST GERMAN GYMNASIA INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

| School | Approx. School Size | No. of Classes Visited | Community | Dominant Polit. Party | No. of Staff Interv. | No. of Students Interv. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 700 | 3 | North City | SD | 3 | 82 |
| 2 | 1200 | 2 | North Sub. | CD | 2 | 34 |
| 3 | 700 | 3 | North City | SD | 1 | 69 |
| 4 | 615 | 3 | North-Cent. Rural | SD | 1 | 56 |
| 5 | 360 | 1 | Cent. Rural | SD | 1 | 17 |
| 6 | 540 | 2 | North-Cent. Small City | CD | 1 | 29 |
| 7 | 630 | 1 | North-Cent. Rural | SD | 2 | 16 |
| 8 | 450 | 1 | Cent. City | SD | 2 | 13 |
| 9 | 1230 | 1 | Cent. City | SD | 1 | 27 |
| 10 | 830 | 1 | Cent. City | CD | 4 | 22 |
| 11 | 700 | 3 | Small Cent. City | CD | 1 | 55 |
| 12 | 600 | 1 | Southern Sub. | CD | 2 | 20 |
| 13 | 500 | 1 | Southern City | CD | 1 | 19 |
| 14 | 1100 | 1 | Southern City | CSU | 1 | 14 |
| 15 | 970 | 1 | Southern Sub. | CSU | 1 | 18 |
| 16 | 1400 | 2 | Northwest Small City | SD | 2 | 27 |
| 17 | 1100 | 1 | Northwest City | SD | 1 | 18 |
| TOTAL | | 28 | | | 25 | 536 |

During the class interviews conducted, questions asked of the students ranged from those that required relatively simple knowledge such as when the pacts were formed, their general aims, and names of the member nations, to the more complex issues of the relationships among the nations of each pact. Class discussion of the complex issues were also conducted. Quantitative data were produced in two ways. Percentage of pupils in the class who indicated that they knew answers to the questions were recorded, and the quality of the discussions of the more complex questions were rated on a scale of 1 to 5. Multiple analysis of variance of the percentage values and qualitative scale values were performed with political orientation of the locations of the classes as the independent variable. The same dependent variables were analyzed using urban-suburban versus rural areas as the independent variable.

## The Findings

Since some of the date from student interviews were analyzed quantitatively and some qualitatively, the findings will be presented in that fashion.

### Quantitative Analysis Results

The Quantitative analyses produced mixed results. For example, the MANOVA using all the dependent variables - answers to questions from simple to complex and qualitative ratings of the discussions - produced no significant differences between classes in "conservative" versus "liberal" Länder. A second analysis, in which simple knowledge questions were removed from consideration, produced a statistically significant MANOVA between the two nominal classifications at the .04 level in favor of classes in the SPD areas, but the univariate analyses showed no single variable to be

significant. Analyses using urban-suburban versus rural areas as the nominal independent variable showed no significant differences in the answers to questions.

From an educators point of view, another interesting aspect of the quantitative study of the results is in the simple descriptive statistics which show the general level of knowledge among the German students interviewed. On the first four variables (simple knowledge questions) the German students varied from members of one class with no knowledge regarding the approximate time when each of the two pacts were formed, to 100% of the students in another class being able to name at least two member states in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The general level of such knowledge for the German students is illustrated by an overall 41% average on the four simple knowledge questions. (This compares with a 39% average on such questions among above average ability 12th grade students in the study conducted in the state of Virginia).

The gymnasia students in Germany, like their counterparts in Virginia and Great Britain, showed a rather low level of knowledge of the more difficult questions regarding the history of the NATO-Warsaw Pact Confrontation. The German students' twenty-one percent average response rate is indicative that relatively few of them had knowledge of events such as the Hungarian revolt and other periods of extreme tension, and attempts to ease tensions, such as the SALT agreements. On the other hand, there were almost always a small number of students, in the gymnasia classes visited, who showed wide knowledge of current conditions involving NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Teachers in Germany, as well as those in the United Kingdom and the state of Virginia, all pointed out that the study of NATO and the Warsaw Pact is reserved for the last part of the second semester of the final school year. All three studies were conducted prior to that part of the school year. It might be assumed, therefore, that the more detailed historical aspects of the topic would be included after the research visits. An important consideration, however, is that students in all three countries showed a wide variance of knowledge. For example, in the German classes the number of students who indicated that they could answer the more complex questions varied from an average low of 4.5% to a high of 42%. This means that for some reason the students in some areas and schools are much more aware of this aspect of modern history than are the students in other schools. The possible explanation for the phenomenon is addressed in the discussion of the findings.

One of the most surprising findings of the study was that a small but significant number of West German gymnasia students, in all parts of the country, would like to see a substantial reduction in American armed forces presence in their country. Although the percentages varied from 11% to 21%, differences between numbers in liberal and conservative areas were not enough to be considered significantly different.

At the end of each interview, students were asked to identify the primary and secondary source, as they saw it, of their knowledge of the subject. They were also requested to describe the primary source of their opinions regarding the issues discussed. Primary sources of knowledge were attributed as follows: (1) 14% school; (2) 9% parents and/or relatives (3)

7[illegible]% media. Opinions were attributed to: (1) 0.2% school; (2) 27% parents and/or relatives; (3) 28% media; and (4) 45% a combination (primarily parents-media-friends).

Qualitative Analysis Results

The date subjected to qualitative analysis included: (1) the study of curricular material; (2) teacher interviews; (3) student opinions regarding east-west relations in general; and (4) student opinions regarding ways to attain the peaceful resolutions of issues which have caused the long confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The curriculum guides collected from the various Lander visited indicate that indeed the study of NATO and the Warsaw Pact is a formal part of the curriculum at grade 13. What is not clear, however, is whether there is a systematic attempt to link the study of current events to the history of the 40 year long confrontation between the two pacts.

Some material provided by a headmaster in one school included a booklet entitled Aufrusten-Abrusten: Die Suche Nach Wegen Zum Frieden (Armament-Disarmament: The Search for a Way to Peace).[22] This material, and that found in other schools, give some indication that there may be places in West Germany where the method of teaching history deviates from the traditional chronological approach.

The particular booklet, referred to in the previous section, presents a review of the current situation in the light of the historical roots of the cold war and the development of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The author, Claus Grupp, points out that the armament-disarmament debate among opponents is often couched in simplistic--good versus bad--terms because neither side

listens to the rationale of the opposing argument. The truth, as Grupp sees it, lies somewhere between because the history of the cold war is complex. He proposes that peace education is necessary and notes that: "Education about peace is, therefore, education about the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and requires some painful goodbyes to previous ideologies and prejudices."[23]

Some students of the school, where the booklet is used, seem to have taken seriously Grupp's point that the armament-disarmament controversy requires debate based on critical thinking and an understanding of history, rather than mindless slogans and out-of-hand dismissal of opposing views. Classes in the school--one that is using the "Model U.N. School" emphasis--were among the most knowledgeable and proficient in discussing the issues surrounding the forty year NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation. The school has also sponsored contacts with students from Warsaw Pact countries. That the contacts have not engendered uniform feelings about the issues was evident from the debates among the students about controversial topics. For example, an argument developed as to whether close relations with the eastern bloc is a really good idea. Students in another school, which sponsors visits to East Germany, showed similar ambivalence.

A curriculum guide which comes closest to Grupp's proposal is to be found in the Kiel city system. There the city government is controlled by the Social Democrats and the Land, Schleswig-Holstein, is lead by a slimly held conservative coalition. (An election since the time of the research has produced a majority in the the SD party in the Land.) The guide, entitled Erziehung zum Frieden and Sicherheitspolitik (Education for Peace and

Security Policy)[24], appears to be a compromise between Grupp's more liberal ideal and the conservative expression of peace through strength. The following is a series of quotations from the guide which illustrate the point:

> One of the purposes and duties of the school is to put forward the ideals of peace and the procurement of human right.....
>
> Teachers must take part in the process.....
>
> Students must participate in open discussion of the issues and their discussions must be based on sound reasoning.....
>
> The reasons for the inclusion of conscientious objectors provision in the basic law must be considered.....
>
> The school cannot indoctrinate about military matters or politics, but must teach within what the Constitution defines as ways to peace.....
>
> The school must encourage armed forces officers to take part in discussion at higher class levels of the oberstuffen gymnasia.....

West German textbooks are, to some extent, influenced by the Georg-Eckert-Institute für Internationale Schulbuchforschung (Institute for School Book Research). Paraphrased passages and quotations from an Institute's publication demonstrates the direction of the influence:[25]

> .....The institute seeks to reduce inaccuracies and nationalistic prejudices often shown in such books. After the first World War, the League of Nations supported such efforts, and after World War II, UNESCO took up the challenge. Georg Eckert was the chairman of the commission that did this. Geography and history books were exchanged and recommendations for changes were made.
>
> .....The Institute, located in Braunschweig, is supported by the central government of West Germany as well as the Lander of Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Nordhein-Westfalen, and Rheinland-Pfaltz.
>
> .....The central aim of the institute is to develop school textbooks which encourage critical thinking....."If a principle of teaching is to teach

> critical analysis of what is read, then the books read by students must no longer be limited to presenting just certain viewpoints. They must present contrasting viewpoints....."

Although support for the Institute comes from six of the eleven Länder, the researcher was not able to determine the extent to which it actually influences text books and text book adaptations in West Germany.

The qualitative analysis of student comments, during interviews and discussions, was very productive in shedding light on the results of the quantitative analysis. The comments made by the West German students during class discussions demonstrates that the variance in their knowledge, and knowledge application to modern issues, is much greater than what could be discerned from the quantitative data analysis. For example, when the students expressed their views of controversial topics, such as disarmament, the Reagan administration vision of "star wars," and the future of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the comments ranged from youthfully naive extreme idealism and simple answers to well reasoned considerations backed by facts. The following two sets of quotations illustrate the range of comments:

1. "If we would disarm (unilaterally), the other side would also disarm."
   "Star War weapons will only protect the U.S."
   "Germany (West) should be neutral."
2. "Getting rid of all nuclear missiles might make it more possible for a conventional war to start since we know that has happened before nations had nuclear weapons."
   "We cannot be sure that the Star Wars system will work because it has not been tested and even if it does, it might not work well enough to stop all missiles launched by the other side. No weapon system has ever been perfect."
   "Neutrality for a strategically positioned power like West Germany is probably not possible and not a good idea."

It must be noted, on the other hand, that although the quantitative analysis of student knowledge favored those in gymnasia of Länder where the curriculum has been reformed (SPD areas), a close look at quotations shows the differences to be not as sharp as those found between the conservative and labor areas of the United Kingdom. Students in both conservative and liberal areas of West Germany, unlike those of the U.K., generally show the same wide variances in their knowledge base.

The more important findings in West Germany concern certain consistencies of student attitude in various parts of Germany toward the leadership which the U.S. has provided for NATO. The gymnasia students interviewed showed a high degree of skepticism that the U.S. would really risk a nuclear war with the USSR to protect West Germany. The source of the skepticism, however, varied somewhat among students in liberal and conservative areas. Students in conservative areas cited the recent Iran-Contra scandal: "I was very disappointed the Mr. Reagan would send arms to a madman (Ayatollah Khomeimi)." Students in liberal areas were more likely to point to Reagan's support for the Contras in Nicaragua, the Viet Nam War, and the raid on Lybia as reasons for their doubt about American policies. Unlike British students, however, the West German students did not tend to dismiss Mr. Reagan as a political hack or a puppet of others. The closest they came to this position was when some students in a conservative area school and some in a liberal area said that Mr. Reagan's policies seemed inconsistent and confused.

The students' skepticism concerning American leadership of NATO probably accounts for some of the ambivalence students voiced concerning German

membership in NATO. While very very few - less than 10% - favor withdrawal, larger numbers - 11% to 21% - favored reduction in U.S. armed forces presence in West Germany. Again students in the schools of the liberal Länder and those in conservative areas cited different reasons for their views. Those in Länder controlled by the Social Democrats were likely to bring up the U.S. air raid on Lybia as an example of U.S. disregard of its NATO partners. Those in conservative areas said that since western Europe has become economically strong, special military defense arrangements with France and Great Britain might be a better way to protect Europe. There were also some surprising comments from a few conservative students - who are primarily in areas of West Germany where American bases are located:

"American troops cause trouble in our towns."

"We are still occupied."

A few students, in one of the schools which patterns its curriculum after the "model U.N." school idea, even took part in an evening discussion of the possibility of a central European neutral, nuclear-free, coalition consisting of East and West Germany, Poland, Austria and Hungary. Although there were some in the group favoring the notion, there were others who were opposed. The debate by both groups demonstrated that students on both sides of the issue based their arguments on sound reasoning and listened to opposing views. An interesting aspect of the debate was that those who favored the foundation of a neutral bloc do not see a unified Germany as necessary or even desirable. Instead they seemed to believe that East Germans would wish to become neutral but remain a separate state. Those against a neutral bloc see it as a Soviet ploy to "Findlandize" central Europe.

Students in other gymnasia visited were in general agreement that the dream of a reunited Germany, which is actually incorporated into the Federal Republic Constitution, is far off or even dead. But like the students cited in the previous paragraph, they are not sure what this means for the future. Many students in the liberal areas and some in conservative areas don't believe that this will prove to be the problem that it was in the past. They referred to the visit to West Germany by East Germany Premire Honecker, which was taking place at the moment, as a demonstration of the reduced tensions. More students in conservative schools, however, believe that "die Deutsche Frage" (the German Question), which encompasses the entire gamut of difficulties engendered by the East-West division of Germany, will continue to be a source of confrontation.

Students from conservative and liberal areas of West Germany showed remarkable uninimity on the question of a need for Reagan and Gorbachev to sign the treaty to abolish medium range missiles. Almost 100% of the students in all parts of the country said they wanted to see the treaty signed. (The U.S.A. and the USSR were close to an agreement at the time when the students were being interviewed). As with the question of U.S. leadership, however, students from conservative versus liberal areas differed on their reasons given for their opinion. Students in Länder controlled by the Social Democrats tended to see the treaty as a first step toward further nuclear disarmament, while students in areas controlled by the conservative parties were more apt to opine that the treaty could lower tensions in Europe; they were not so sure that much more could be accomplished. One student summed up the liberal attitude, "If they sign the treaty, it will be

easier to make progress on the discussions about long range missiles and even conventional forces." A conservative area student, on the other hand, said "I would like them [the middle range missiles] removed so that Germany would not become a nuclear battle ground."

The sharpest difference among students from the liberal and conservative areas of West Germany was on the question of trust for the two leaders of the opposing blocs: Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev. In discussing the issues of obstacles to further disarmament initiatives some students, primarily in the liberal Lander, said that they would rather trust the Soviet leader than the American President. The remarkable aspect of this was not in the number of students who voiced the opinion--which was not a large number--but rather than it was voiced at all. One reason for this might derive from the fact the West German students were not knowledgeable about Reagan's zero-zero proposal on intermediate missiles which he put forth in 1981. Thus, they give him no credit for the idea as a basis for the recently signed treaty. It was also apparent, though, that some students in West Germany, as in Britain, were expressing cynicism resulting from American policies.

Some student views of historical events were puzzling. In one school students voiced the opinion that the building of the Berlin Wall was "no big deal" because "both sides wanted it." At the time the researcher was unable to pursue the issue with the students who had made the remarks because it was made at the end of a classroom period. Interviews with a history teacher in the school, and later with a history teacher in another school where similar remarks were made, may help explain the attitude. Both schools are located in areas of West Germany considered to be less conservative. The two

teachers remarked that "historical documents' which have been uncovered indicate that the Kennedy and Adenauer administrations "went along" with the building of the wall since the tremendous flight from east to west was bringing NATO and the Warsaw Pact to the brink of war. The sources of such information--or misinformation--were not cited, but evidently a few students might have been basing their opinion on the notion.

Although the quantitative analysis of the data showed the West German students to be only slightly more knowledgeable about the historical aspects of the topic than with their British and Virginia counterparts, the qualitative analysis of the interviews revealed a subtle difference which may be significant. In almost every West German school visited, there were some students who were not only very aware of current conditions and events touching on the NATO-Warsaw Pact relations, but who were also able to discuss them with great sophistication. The situation in the U.K. and the State of Virginia was found to be much more spotty.

One way in which discussions with the West German students resembled those with their British counterparts centered on their views of the radical left. Although the students, in all parts of West Germany, paid respect to some views of "Die Grünen" (the small "Greens" political party) regarding environmental concerns, many students disparaged the tactics of disruption and violence of extremists as counterproductive. In some schools the mere mention of Petra Kelly, the German-American who helped found Die Grünen, brought hoots of laughter and remarks deriding her rhetoric.

Finally, it was found that the young people of West Germany, as a group, were very fervent in their expressions of a desire for a real peace: not a

peace generated by mutual fear. In every school in all parts of West Germany, students said that peaceful resolution of conflict is necessary because the alternative can mean the destruction of civilized society. Though they sometimes disagreed with each other on means to that end, there were no students who feigned macho fearlessness about war. This finding is in contrast to the expression made by some of their American counterparts in the Virginia research. In fact, those West Germans who had spent time in the U.S. as exchange students, expressed astonishment to have heard the term "nuke em" from American students as the solution of east-west differences. When the researcher said that the term was probably used in jest, the immediate response was that it is not healthy to joke about such matters. (To be fair, however, it must be reported that the research in Virginia, unlike the study in West Germany, included lower ability classes and students. The term "nuke em" was only expressed by such students. It could reflect an inability to comprehend what is implied by the term, as well as a sick humor that is popular among some Americans).

## Discussion

The research in West Germany to some extent verified the results of the study conducted in the United Kingdom and the State of Virginia. For example, students in the last year of secondary schooling in the three countries all show a wide variance of knowledge concerning the topic. Similarly, interviews in some schools in the three locations showed remarkably good results and others did not. The study in West Germany, however, does not indicate a strong link between the curriculum reform of some of the liberal areas with greater knowledge of the topic as found in the study conducted in the United Kingdom. The research in the U.K. indicated that students in secondary

schools where "Peace Studies" had triggered curriculum reform were generally better informed about the topic investigated. The type of reform engendered in some areas of Britain was found to be the use of current events study as a key to understanding of the historical factors that have led to today's conditions. Of special interest was the finding in Britain that although the conservative Thatcher government feared that peace studies would lead to liberal indoctrination of the students, this did not happen. Instead, the increased knowledge of the subject brought about more informed debate among students concerning issues such as nuclear disarmament and east-west relations.

The findings in West Germany, on the other hand, in some ways resemble those in the study conducted in Virginia: students in some schools are much better informed than those in other schools, but this does not seem to relate strongly to where the school is located. The reason for the variance, however, is not as apparent from the research in West Germany. In Virginia, it was possible--though interviews with social studies teachers--to ascertain the nature of instructional methods used. Those data bolstered the findings from Great Britain that the study of modern history through the window of current events produces a more thorough knowledge and understanding of both. Unfortunately, the method used for the research in Germany did not allow in-depth interviews with social studies teachers in all the schools. Thus, the research in Germany does not provide strong support for the hypothesis.

Nevertheless, some slivers of evidence from West Germany allow for <u>speculation</u> for what might be happening. First, it is quite evident from the quantitative analysis that students in <u>all</u> parts of West Germany rely much

more on the media for their knowledge about the topic investigated than their counterparts in Britain and Virginia who were studied. This might account for the results that indicate only marginally better results in Länder which have made curriculum reform emphasizing modern history and international relations.

Second, the few interviews conducted with social studies teachers indicate that the post World War II era does not receive much emphasis until the final semester of grade 13--even where curriculum reform is supposed to have taken place. Thus, like the schools in Virginia, the real curriculum may often be dictated by outside factors. In Virginia, it appears to be the chronologically oriented texts; in West Germany it may be the arbitur (university entrance examination).

If, like some of their Virginia counterparts, German teachers take a chronological approach to teaching modern history, most students would have a low level of knowledge about NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Presumably the problem would be corrected when the modern era is studied. Students who take a special interest in the political events covered by the media, however, are likely to be those small numbers in the gymnasia of almost every part of Germany who displayed deep and sophisticated knowledge about NATO and the Warsaw Pace--especially the current state of affairs.

For example, during the time when the research was conducted, East German Premier Ernst Honecker made a historical visit to the Federal Republic. Almost all students in gymnasia visited were aware of the event and at least a few students in each class were able to discuss the importance of the visit from a historical perspective. Students in the U.S. and Britain, however, in those classes where teachers made no special effort to use current events

study as an integrated part of the curriculum, often showed a complete lack of even the most fundamental knowledge about NATO and the Warsaw Pact at any point in history--even very recent events of great importance like the Iceland Summit.

In the two "Model U.N." oriented schools, and several other schools visited, where it was possible to confirm that the current scene is followed closely as a part of social studies, interviews did indicate a wider group knowledge about the NATO and Warsaw Pact relationship than the average for gymnasia in the country as a whole. Again it must be cautioned that the small number of social studies teachers interviewed do not provide conclusive evidence of a relationship between the variables.

Although variance in knowledge about NATO and the Warsaw-Pact could not be linked to regional differences as in Britain, subtle, but significant, differences in attitudes toward the issues were detected during the research.

Although students in conservative, as well as liberal areas of West Germany, were critical of U.S. leadership of NATO, conservative area students cited recent events as sources of their views. Students in liberal areas were also more likely to favor a neutral stance for the Federal Republic as a viable option. In places near the Danish border, students were even echoing the call of their neighbors for a nuclear free Europe.

## Conclusions

The research indicates that the gymnasia students interviewed in West Germany, as a group, tend to be marginally better informed about NATO and the Warsaw Pact than the comparable (high ability) American and British students interviewed. The best of the German students--like the best of the British students--discussed the issues on a higher plane than the Americans. It is

not clear, however, if this is a result of better educational experience, or the fact that the Europeans interviewed were, for the most part, at the grade 13 level, or perhaps as a result of some other variable(s).

The findings of the study conducted in Germany appear to confirm the previous research cited by Ehman which indicates that the secondary school has little influence in shaping political attitude--especially among students from the higher social strata. The West German situation in this regard is interesting in the light of recent history. The country has developed a very large middle class. The children of the class, who make up the majority of gymnasia students, tend to reflect a spectrum of attitudes about east-west relations that is not to the extreme right or left. Further, with few exceptions, school authorities and teachers seem to go out of their way to avoid political indoctrination in any respect. Textbook and curriculum guides, as well as most individuals interviewed, reflect this. Only a handful of students attributed their attitudes to school influence. Instead the media and parental attitudes appear to shape their attitudes in West Germany.

A disappointing aspect of the research in Germany--as it was in the studies conducted in Britain and the State of Virginia--was the relatively low level of student knowledge regarding some of the historical aspects of the NATO-Warsaw Pact four decade confrontation. The West German students interviewed were generally unaware of details concerning the post World War II cold war era. Some teachers interviewed attributed this to a lack of emphasis on World War II and the immediate conditions of surrender and occupation. Those same teachers viewed the reason as a sense of shame that has not yet receded. The number of teachers who voice the view, however, was not large

enough to confirm the idea.

To be sure, there were some noteable exceptions where students of almost an entire class had something significant to say about the issues. An important aspect of this is that the young people in such classes did not take one view. Instead they debated intelligently both sides of controversial topics; issues such as if and how NATO and West Germany should approach disarmament were debated vigorously. Though the evidence is not conclusive, the schools and classes which showed the spark tend to be those where teachers and school authorities have required students to keep abreast of current events and to take part in school sponsored east-west contacts. If the assessment is accurate, it would reinforce the notion that secondary schools in a democracy can improve both democratic behavior and breath of knowledge by encouraging students to examine all sides of current issues. A problem with teaching modern history may be that a strict chronological approach delays the process until it is too late for secondary education to have the desired impact.

There were important questions which appeared as the result of the research conducted in West Germany. The most notable of these was why a few West Germans seem to believe that an American president and his administration, along with some of the NATO allies, colluded with the eastern bloc in the building of the Berlin Wall. Such a belief, even if it is baseless, might cause great damage to the free world alliances. The need to determine the source and accuracy of the idea is apparent.

Another unanswered question is a result of the type of schools included in the research conducted. West German education is highly stratified; thus, there is a need to do research about the same issues among students who do

not attend gymnasia. Although the high ability young people of the West German gymnasia represent a very important segment of the school population, it would be very useful to know whether they see things in the same way as students who are not as able academically.

The study in West Germany leaves an impression that NATO's role in the future is much in question. If the gymnasia students interviewed reflect West German thought, the ambivalence displayed about NATO may signal some sort of change. The special military tactical operations conducted by French and West German forces, immediately after NATO maneuvers in the fall of 1987, would seem to indicate that change is already taking place. Less clear is whether the West Germans and the Europeans will build, and maintain, strong conventional military forces if the U.S. and USSR lower their nuclear capabilities. In the absence of bi-lateral conventional force reduction, and with a possibility that the desire for U.S. force withdrawal will become greater, neutrality could <u>appear</u> to be a viable option for central Europeans.

Finally, the findings of the study show that democratic behavior and the desire for peace is strong among the students who were included in the study. Since West Germany has emerged from the dark shadow of Naziism as a democratic nation, the findings are reassuring. Education has encouraged the trend, but the research in West Germany, as well as in Great Britain and the United States, shows that democratic idealism taught in the schools must be reinforced by democratic behavior on the part of the leadership in <u>all</u> such nations. Each failure, whether internal or external, is noticed by young people and can lead to a cynicism that might be deadly to the democracies. How would it be possible then, without individual freedom, to conceive of "peace"?

# Chapter 5

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE THREE STUDIES

Although the research conducted in the three NATO nations was an inquiry of secondary student understanding and attitudes about the issues, important, albeit tentative implications can be drawn about the teaching of modern history. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to drawing those implications and presenting suggestions for the improvement of instruction in modern history.

### Implications

From the moment that the researcher first encountered the excitement engineered among students and teachers by "peace education" in British schools, the answer to the question "why" began to loom large. For it seemed that the answer to that question might provide a solution to a major problem posed at the commencement of the research: What can be learned about ways to enhance secondary student understanding of modern history?

Obviously, if "peace studies" in and of itself provided the interest, the answer would be a sterile solution. But that did not prove to be the case. By the time of the 1985 study in the United Kingdom, the narrowly defined "peace studies" had evolved into a combination of concerns about the environment, and conflict resolution ranging from those between individuals and among groups of all sizes including nations and nation groupings.

Since students exposed to "peace studies" seemed to better understand the historical aspects and issues of the subject at hand--the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation--something beyond the subject itself must be related to the results. A part of the answer seemed to lie in the controversy stirred

up by the strong reaction of the Thacher government to the inclusion of "peace studies" in the school curriculum. The reaction had made headline news in the early 1980s. (Interest was still high in 1986. The author's findings regarding peace studies were the subject of a front page review of The Times of London)[26]

The important aspect of the research in the U.K. was not the effect of peace studies on student attitudes. (The findings confirmed [redacted] Ehman's theory that secondary student attitudes are rather stable and not easily swayed.) Rather the deeper understanding of historical events, as a result of connecting them with correct issues, seemed to be a possible explanation of the findings of the pilot study in the United Kingdom. Thus the follow-up research in the state of Virginia was specifically designed to test the hypothesis that the study of modern historical events is improved by looking back at them in the light of current conditions--particularly those events embroiled in controversy.

Since the study in Virginia, like the one conducted in the United Kingdom, was descriptive in nature, a conclusive cause-effect link was precluded. The possibility of that type of nexus, however, became apparent from the findings. Students, particularly those in advanced classes, taught by instructors who use current events study to supplement the regular classroom fare showed superior knowledge of the subject of the research. More impressive, were the abilities of the same students to apply a measure of critical thinking to the issues.

Research in West Germany was, by necessity, more concentrated on

determining the extent to which the peace movement had affected student knowledge and attitudes concerning NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The emphasis of the research was to determine what was being studied and learned about the topic, both in and out of the school, by a special segment of the secondary school population--gymnasia students. The findings, again to be considered inconclusive for several reasons, appear to suggest that social science teachers who insist upon a strictly chronological approach to modern history instruction may be missing an opportunity to develop a deeper, as well as a wider understanding, of the subject by their students.

They may also be failing to accomplish a goal which is widely touted as major aim of education: to help students to develop skill in critical thinking. Many times, in the course of conducting the research, that particular goal was found among those listed in curriculum guides as an important need to be met through study of the social studies. In discussions with teachers, headmasters and principals, they emphasized the idea that social studies subjects such as government, history, international relations, and civics, are placed in the curriculum to help students to meet their responsibilities as citizens in democracies. But whether the processes of teaching the subjects allows much emphasis upon critical thinking about issues was not clear. Further, the findings of study from class discussions among students, with some notable exceptions in each of the research sites, were not encouraging. Thus, it appears that no systematic attempt has been made to experiment with a method of teaching modern history that seems to have been stumbled upon by the educators in the U.K. There, some people brought "peace studies" to the schools as a specific way of meeting a

different need. But the results of the study suggest that critical thinking, and greater knowledge of the subject, may be more than a by-product of teaching that begins with current controversies.

## Recommendations

It would be prudent as a first step, therefore, for some school system, or systems, to test, experimentally, an approach to teaching modern history by revising the usual eleventh grade history and twelfth government courses. The second half of the grade eleven history course, which ostensibly deals with modern American history would no longer continue to treat the topic chronologically. Instead current events, particularly controversial topics, such as recent Supreme Court decisions, Congressional actions such as the Iran-Contra hearings, news about issues concerning peace and war, and economic conditions such as the 1987 stock market crash could be used to look back at the various important aspects of the modern era.

Similarly, all of twelfth grade government course, which the text books present as a boring litany of governmental structure, should be transformed. Instead, the dynamism of present issues, such as constitutional questions raised by the appointment of a special prosecutor to try Oliver North and company, could provide the point of departure for understanding separation of powers as a concept. Local issues, and events, which are covered by the media, would provide the source for beginning to understand government at those levels.

Undoubtedly, some teachers in some localities are already doing the things suggested. Evidently what has not been done is to study the process under a set of controlled conditions that, if successful, might convince

people to abandon the apparently sterile approach of chronology. That the normal method of teaching modern history is not working was apparent from the studies conducted regarding one important piece of the modern period--the NATO-Warsaw Pact four decade confrontation. Other recent researches have suggested that it is not working in the teaching of a wide variety of topics included under the rubric "modern history."

Henry Kissinger, writing about "A New Era for NATO"[27] noted that while he was the U.S. Secretary of State he had concluded that .... "the next generation of leaders in Europe, Canada and American will have neither the personal memory nor the emotional commitment to the Atlantic Alliance of its founders...." The research conducted in the United Kingdom, the state of Virginia and West Germany confirms Kissingers observation. The results probably are an indication that young people consider such matters to be "ancient" history, even if the schools label them "modern" history. Whether one would agree or disagree with Mr. Kissinger's assessment of the need to revive the NATO commitment, it is obvious that democratic nations require citizenry that is both informed and able to confront issues through a process of critical analysis. Picking one's way through a chronology of events does not seem to accomplish either objective.

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